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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 001837

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [MCAP](#) [MARR](#) [PINS](#) [PNAT](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: STRATEGIC SECURITY DIALOGUE WITH ISCI CONTINUES

Classified By: Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C/REL MNF-I) SUMMARY: At a May 27 meeting of the joint Coalition - Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council (ISCI) Security Committee, Badr Organization leader (and CoR Security and Defense Committee Chairman) Hadi al-Amri told MNF-I Deputy Chief of Staff for Strategic Effects MG Winfield Scott that over seventy-percent of Sadr City residents do not support Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM) and that ISCI could help in building support for the Coalition within the area. He added that while operation Fardh Al Qanoon (FAQ) was making progress, the Coalition must better protect Baghdad's numerous bridges, seal off the city, and arm local tribes to fight insurgents.

12. (C/REL MNF-I) SUMMARY CONTINUED: Al-Amri asserted that ISCI Security forces should be allowed to possess machine guns to defend their offices and requested the Coalition's permission. MG Scott stated that GOI policy explicitly banned heavy weapons. He added that Iraqi and Coalition policy does not allow Iraqi Army or Coalition Forces to guard political party facilities. He also informed al-Amri that the list of ISCI detainees presented at the previous meeting was still being reviewed. Concluding, Al-Amri reaffirmed ISCI desires to become partners with the Coalition. The Committee will meet again on Sunday June 2 for further discussions on these topics. END SUMMARY.

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Improving FAQ  
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13. (C/REL MNF-I) As part of an on-going series of meetings to advance the Coalition-ISCI strategic security partnership, Badr Organization leader and CoR Security and Defense Committee Chairman Hadi al-Amri met with MNF-I Major General Winfield Scott, members of his staff, and Emboffs. Al-Amri emphasized the importance of FAQ, saying that if it were successful, the rest of the country would follow. He asserted that despite its initial success, FAQ had several flaws, especially its failure to fully control entry/exit into Baghdad, and emphasized that plans for the "Baghdad berm" must be fully implemented and include equipment to detect explosives. He added that Baghdad's bridges were a strategic target and that their security must be improved. He said he had spoken to Baghdad Operational Commander Abbud regarding this.

14. (C/REL MNF-I) Al-Amri argued that the introduction of non-local troops into Baghdad was a mistake because these units do not know Baghdad and would only serve to antagonize the population. He advised that non-local forces be used only to conduct raids and guard sensitive areas, while local forces police the city. Al-Amri criticized the sequential nature of FAQ's clearing operations as a "cat and mouse"

game, saying that when Coalition and ISF "search Shaab, they (the insurgents) go to Sadr City; when Bayaa is searched, they go to Hay al Amel."

15. (C/REL MNF-I) Al-Amri concluded by advocating the arming of tribes against the insurgents, saying that the government must create additional Anbar Salvation Council-type organizations. He said that any such tribal groups must be under the command of MOD or MOI, emphasizing that these groups must not be permitted to develop into militias. (Note: Al Amri commented that Saddam Hussein skillfully used tribes against his opposition, adding that he had learned this through "hard personal experience.") MG Scott agreed with al-Amri's comments on tribes, adding that the recent success in Anbar/Abu Ghraib was due to tribal leaders supporting the government against insurgents.

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MG Scott: FAQ is focused on the Long-term  
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16. (C/REL MNF-I) MG Scott stated that FAQ was different from previous security efforts because it focused on maintaining a permanent security presence in Baghdad's neighborhoods. In addition, the GOI was working to build public trust and confidence by removing trash, repairing infrastructure, and working to generate small businesses. Scott said that good progress had been made in reducing sectarian deaths, but acknowledged that spectacular bombings had increased. He added that the Coalition was working to destroy car and suicide bomb cells. Scott emphasized that the surge of coalition troops was not yet complete and that judgments on FAQ's success would take time.

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Arming ISCI Office Guards  
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17. (C/REL MNF-I) Al-Amri expressed concern that insurgents frequently threaten ISCI offices, noting that two had recently been burned down. He added that while this risk was increasing, Coalition Forces were arresting ISCI guards and confiscating their weapons, further increasing their vulnerability. To redress this, he requested that ISCI offices be allowed to maintain both AK-47s and machine guns for self defense. Coalition Forces, he emphasized, would have the right to inspect ISCI offices at any time to verify the weapons' identification data. MG Scott replied that GOI policy, for good reason, explicitly banned heavy weapons such as machine guns.

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Most in Sadr City Do Not Support JAM  
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18. (C/REL MNF-I) Al-Amri claimed a number of JAM members had once served in Saddam's intelligence apparatus. He said that these JAM members were now conducting sectarian attacks aimed at destabilizing the government. He added that many criminals groups claim JAM membership as cover for their activities. As a result, much of the population (he estimated over seventy percent) had turned against JAM. On the other hand, he said that the Sadr City population was still very distrustful of the Coalition. Al-Amri suggested that ISCI might be able to help build support for the Coalition in Sadr City, since it was gaining influence within the area. He concluded by reaffirming ISCI's desire to be partners with the Coalition in such efforts.

19. (U) The next meeting is scheduled for June 3.  
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